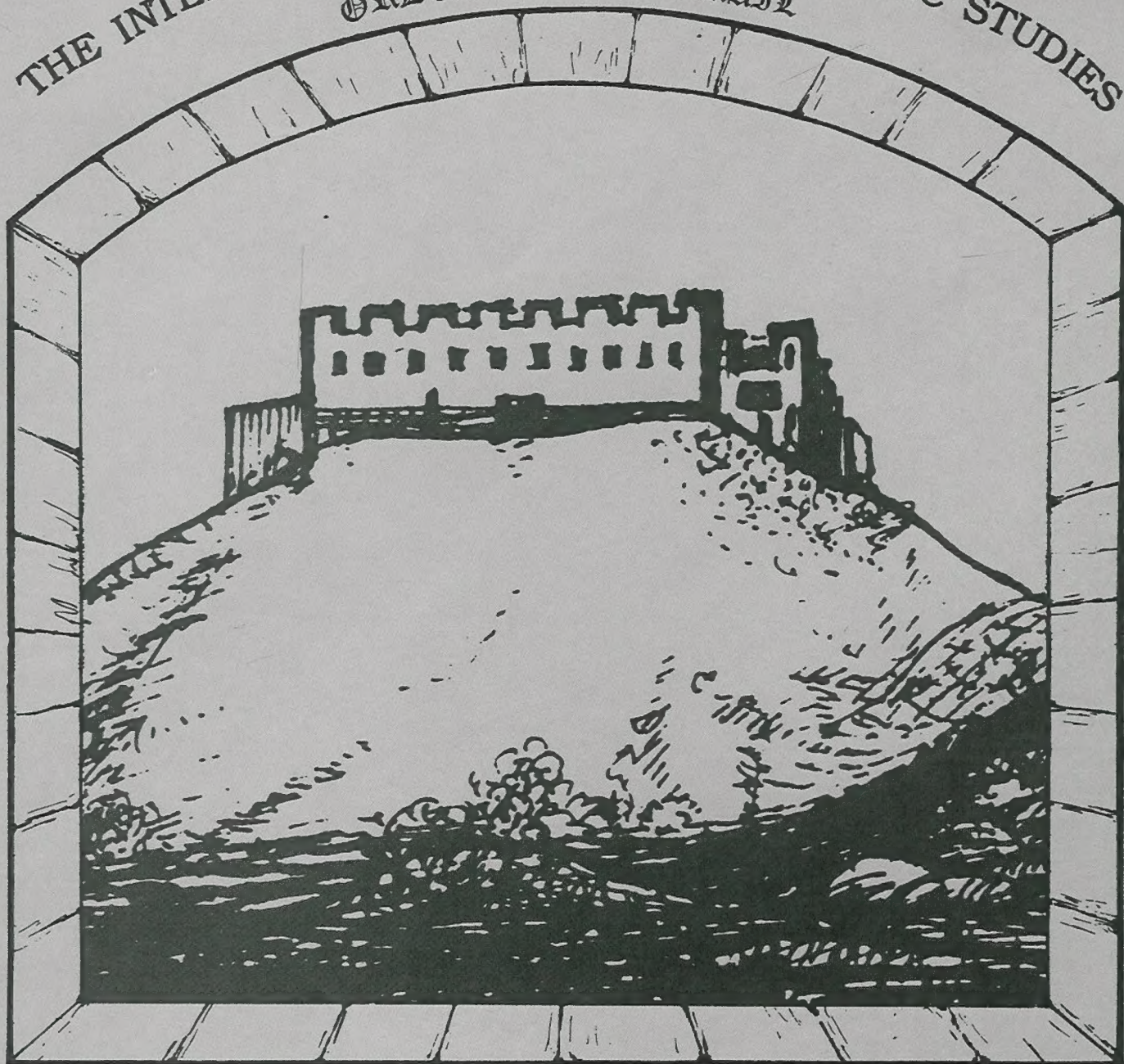


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ASTRAL PROJECTION AS A MEANS OF PROVING IMMORTALITY

For some time now we have been giving our attention to metaphysical and mystical concepts. You have read and studied a great deal and we hope you have attained some satisfaction and benefit from your labours.

In spite of all you have cogitated upon however, and what you may BELIEVE ... the ultimate question is this: **Do you in FACT have a soul?** If you do, if indeed you are a non-physical entity, if you are a spiritual being, **do you KNOW it?** Can you say with absolute certainty, as an indelible truth, that you ARE an immortal being and that you, your consciousness, can or does survive the event called "death"?

These questions have been asked many times: what is life all about? Is there is a purpose to life? Of course there are many answers but I would like to propose that any real, deep or ultimate answer would depend on whether life ends in oblivion when "death" comes ... or whether we, i.e. our consciousness, lives on.

NEED FOR EXPERIENCE I would like to submit that we are at that point in our studies where the time has come to set aside the philosophic and come directly to terms with the actual and the real. I would like to submit that the time has come when we must KNOW and not merely BELIEVE. As Roger Bacon, one of the founders of modern science said: "There are two modes of knowing - through argument and experience. Argument brings conclusions and compels us to concede them, but does not cause certainty nor remove doubts in order that the mind may remain at rest in truth, unless this is provided by experience." I submit then, that the time has come for us to lay aside all our arguments and speculations ... and EXPERIENCE.

(Discussion.

Lodge Master will proceed with the balance of the lecture only if the Brethren agree that to have experience is desirable.)

SOUL/CONSCIOUSNESS Before we go on it will be necessary for us to define what we understand the word 'soul' to mean because, as we all well know, this word is used by different people to mean different things. Since we have gone into

some detail in our study of soul in previous lectures, and since the topic is sure to come up again, let us simply agree that in this lecture we will use the word 'soul' to mean our **body of consciousness** (whether this may or may not include the etheric body, astral body, etc. is not important for this assignment) ... because what we are going to do is to attempt to "project" our consciousness out of our physical body and thereby be in a position to prove to ourselves that *consciousness can exist independently of the body*. As we become adept at this and continue with independent tests and experiments experiments, we will each have certain **experience** and **knowledge** which will then enable us to KNOW whether "we" are in fact a physical body only, or whether "we" exist independently and the physical body is only a "garment" we wear while incarnated on this plane (as we have been taught). There are also many other questions we will be able to answer for ourselves, answers which will move ideas and concepts from the realm-of-belief into the world-of-knowledge.

THE OUT-OF-THE-BODY EXPERIENCE *Fundamentally, the basis of the concept of soul should not be an **idea** but an **experience**.* Indeed, thousands, if not millions of people alive today have had the experience of existing outside the space of their physical bodies for a brief period and experiencing this separated state as **real**, not just as a dream or as an imaginary experience. The typical consequence of such an out-of-the-body experience is on the order of "I no longer **believe** that I have a soul, or that some part of me will survive death, I **KNOW** it!" This is the certainty we each must have.

ASTRAL PROJECTION "Astral projection" is the ability to "leave the body". Astral projections occur in two ways: either involuntarily ("it just happened"), or at will.

Here is an example of a typical case of an involuntary astral projection: it's been a long day and you're tired. You come home, nearly doze off in front of the television set, then you wander down the hall and plop on your bed expecting to fall asleep in an instant. But, suddenly and mysteriously, you find yourself paralyzed in a state of catalepsy. Gushing sounds fill your ears. Bright flashes flicker under your closed eyelids. Then you feel as if you're beginning to float.

A moment later, you open your eyes and find yourself hovering above your body. You **are** floating in the air! You are able to examine your physical body and everything else in the room from this viewpoint of independent perspective. Your mind is perfectly clear and you feel a freedom and expanded sense of awareness you have never experienced before. But just as you're beginning to orient yourself to this new and novel state of being, you have a momentary "blackout". Within a fraction of a second you "awake" back inside your body.

ASTRAL PROJECTIONS ARE COMMON

If this has ever happened to you, you are not alone. The experience may have been frightening, transcendent, or mere puzzling. But it was not unique. Millions of people have undergone this strange adventure which has variously been called astral projection, out-of-the-body travel, ESP projection and a host of other things.

ASTRAL PROJECTIONS ARE VERIDICAL

It is unfortunately true, however, that the classic out-of-body experience (OBE for short), does vaguely resemble certain phenomena studied in psychiatry and abnormal psychology. A psychiatrist reading the above account might classify it as an example of depersonalization (a feeling that the self is no longer real), distortion of body image (where the sense of the body's boundaries becomes confused), or autocopy (the seeing of one's own apparition). The OBE is remarkably different from these anomalies of perception in one great - and vastly important way - however. It is often **veridical**, or truth-telling. In other words, persons who "leave the body" and travel to a location miles away, are usually able to correctly see and describe what was going on there. This aspect of the OBE takes it out of the hands of the psychiatrist and into the hands of the parapsychologist and those scientists who study the strange byways of psychic phenomena. And course "astral projection" is nothing new to mystics and occultists who have known about it, practiced it, and used it for centuries.

Some people experience their out-of-body self as an apparitional double of the physical body and may even see the threadlike cord (silver cord) that connects the two organisms, others merely experience themselves as a speck or ball of light, or simply float about totally disembodied.

A question you may have is this: just because we have the capacity to experience an involuntary OBE, does this mean we can actually learn to do it at will? The unqualified answer is: **Yes**. There was a time that the OBE was thought to be a rare experience, something that belonged only in the domain of great mystics and powerful psychics, however since the middle of the twentieth century, serious scientific research has been given to all aspects of what was previously branded the "supernatural", (it now has the dignified name of 'paranormal'), and it has been "discovered" that any "average" citizen can learn to master the art of astral projection.

THE LAST ENEMY

We will not concern ourselves here with pages of statistics, data, references and history, since all this can be obtained from the many books now widely available. We will concern ourselves only with the pertinent information that will enable us to experience certain proofs for ourselves. You have heard it said that the last great enemy to be overcome is the fear of death. People fear death

because they do not understand it. And of course their minds are full of fear about "eternal hell and damnation" which they have allowed their religious leaders to frighten them with. People like life and they want to know if they will continue to live when they pass through the door named "death". People have the gift of consciousness and they want to know if they will continue a conscious existence after the change comes. Most people hope so. Perhaps most people believe so.

Companions at this stage on the Path neither wish to hope nor to believe ... they want to KNOW. They want first hand evidence which will remove any doubt about the matter. NO ONE can TELL you something that only PERSONAL EXPERIENCE can provide. So the time has come to find out first hand whether we do in fact have a "soul", whether consciousness can survive independently of the body, and to have answered all the many other questions having to with "survival" that each of us has.

From my own personal experience I wish to assure you that astral projection is neither unusual nor unnatural ... you "project" every time you go to sleep! The "problem" is you do not maintain conscious awareness so you are unaware of it. (As an aside, you might like to ask yourself what becomes of your consciousness when you sleep. Does consciousness go "out" like a light when you switch it off?) Like the subject of "hypnotism" there has been much misinformation circulated about the out-of-the-body state. It is positively untrue that you can get "lost in the astral and unable to find your way back"!!! Or that while you are projected the silver cord may snap and you will die!!! etc. Were these old wives' stories true it would mean that each time we go to sleep at night we would be in grave danger!!!

ASTRAL PROJECTIONS ARE EXHILARATING An astral projection is not only something very natural, it is exhilarating, stimulating and delightful. In a conscious astral projection your mind is perfectly clear, you are in complete control of all your thinking and cognitive faculties. You only have to say to yourself "I want to wake up....." and instantly you do.

THE GOAL IS PROOF As indicated at the opening of this talk, the goal is to prove to yourself that consciousness can be separated from the physical body, that it can exist independently of the physical body, and that "you" are not your body. I am therefore going to give you several methods to achieve this proof. I also indicated that there are now in the market many books, well documented and containing a great deal of scientific information which you may obtain for further study. It would be superfluous, unnecessary and time consuming to attempt to present it here. Besides, new information is coming out all the time.

I would like to recommend Leaving the Body by D. Scott Rogo. ISBN 0-13-528026-5. Paperback. Published by Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632. Companions will find this a valuable publication to have.

Following is one method given in the just mentioned book, and three others. Astral Projection is as much an art as it is a science. The following methods work ... if you work them! As with learning to play a musical instrument or to drive a car ... practice is the key.

—o—o—o—o—o—o—o—o—

Projection Through Progressive Muscular Relaxation

In this age of stress and anxiety, the psychological and medical establishments are taking a renewed interest in the holistic benefits of physical relaxation. It has been aptly demonstrated that simple relaxation reduces muscle tension, alleviates anxiety, helps the body recover from illness, and benefits the mind and body in a host of other ways as well. No wonder that Dr. Herbert Benson of the Harvard Medical School found his 1975 book, *The Relaxation Response*, on the national best-seller list. Written in plain language, it extolled the virtues of relaxation and offered uncomplicated formulas by which anyone could learn the art. One subject that Dr. Benson did not touch on was astral projection; yet over the years many people have induced both spontaneous and willful OBEs by the use of relaxation techniques. Although these methods vary from authority to authority, they all stress that an OBE will take place only when the body can be stilled and quieted.

BACKGROUND

The use of some sort of relaxation exercise to induce the OBE is probably a very old art. The technique makes practical sense. We are literally the prisoners of our bodies. We are constantly bombarded by all sorts of sen-

sory stimuli that register through the body's perceptual organs, as well as by proprioceptive stimuli—sensations that arise from within the body itself. Most of us would find it incomprehensible to think of ourselves as something apart from our bodies, which is probably one reason why OBEs are not even more common than they are. We are so chained to the body and the pleasures and sensations we receive from it that we constantly inhibit ourselves from experiencing release from its confines.

Any technique that helps us to abandon our dependence on the body may well "allow" an OBE to take place.

Dr. John Palmer of John F. Kennedy University has written that "the notion that muscular relaxation may facilitate the OBE . . . makes theoretical sense because the relative lack of proprioceptive feedback from relaxed muscles may facilitate loss of body consciousness." As shown in Chapter 1, Palmer successfully used relaxation (in part) to help his volunteer college students achieve OBEs, or something akin to them. The message in all this is that one might not have to force the consciousness to leave the body in order to have an OBE, as Lancelin taught. One might merely allow an OBE to take place by working directly with the body more passively. Instead of usurping consciousness from the body, perhaps there might be a way to lower the body's guard so that consciousness can escape from it momentarily!

In this respect, it is more than revealing that many talented out-of-body travelers have quite independently induced OBEs through the use of relaxation, even though they have not been formally trained in the art of deep relaxation. Sylvan Muldoon, for instance, learned that he could induce OBEs by deliberately stilling the body and reducing his pulse rate. The primary result of this procedure was that he entered into a state of deep relaxation. (Muldoon's techniques are discussed in more depth later in this chapter.) Similar case histories could be cited as well. Blue Harary (discussed in Chapter 2), for instance, regularly employs relaxation procedures as he prepares to leave the body.

With increased interest in the art of relaxation, more and more "pop psychology" manuals are being written on just how to achieve this calm, peaceful state. It is now possible for anyone to take an hour out of the day and learn the basic techniques. With diligent practice, body relaxation can be learned within a week.

Relaxation techniques of all kinds have been around for years. The

ancient yogis taught their disciples relaxation by instructing them to focus full attention on their own rhythmic breathing. Many Christian mystics also focused on breathing to quiet the mind and body as an adjunct to prayer. Another method for inducing deep relaxation was to repeat key phrases over and over along with the breathing. These methods may see much more mind-oriented than body-oriented, but remember that mind and body dynamically interact with each other. Relax one, and you automatically relax the other.

Not until fairly recently, however, were techniques for physical relaxation formally developed and taught in academic psychology. The first formally developed system was published in the 1930s when Dr. Edmund Jacobson of the University of Chicago issued his book, *Progressive Relaxation*, which explained how a state of deep relaxation could be obtained by progressively tensing and relaxing each of the body's muscle groups. Progressive self-relaxation became a popular psychological tool in the 1950s when Dr. Joseph Wolpe of the Eastern Pennsylvania State Psychiatric Institute showed that many phobias could be cured by teaching patients to remain relaxed while envisioning the object(s) of their fears.

Although Jacobson codified and formalized the practice of progressive muscular relaxation, he really did not invent it. Progressive relaxation of the body by working with the major muscle groups has been around for years. The primary virtue of Jacobson's specific exercises is that they help the subject to achieve a sense of deep relaxation, or at least appreciate the feeling of such calm. This depth is reached because the subject is constantly forced to compare the effect of relaxation to that of tension as he or she contracts and releases each muscle group.

THE TECHNIQUE

Many people relax and meditate, but not all of them end up having OBEs. Obviously, progressive muscular relaxation is only the first step to conscious control of the OBE. Inducing a state of progressive muscular relaxation (or PMR) should, therefore, be used as a state into which you must enter before actively willing an OBE to take place. Specific instructions for this combination of PMR and dynamic willing are given later in this chapter.

There are two different methods one can use to induce this form of deep relaxation. The first is to lie down comfortably and mentally go over the procedure. The other is through the use of taped instructions.

The simplest way to approach PMR is, of course, through mental exercise. There are various ways to broach the basic technique, but the following step-by-step program will accomplish the requisite task of getting you deeply relaxed.

The way you go about relaxing is, however, just as important as the exercises themselves. So, before beginning, keep the following points in mind:

1. *Find a comfortable place to begin. You can use a chair, bed, or couch, although relaxing in a prone position will probably facilitate the OBE. (One survey conducted in England some years back revealed that an overwhelming number of people who had spontaneous OBEs were lying down at the time.)*
2. *As you begin, do not tense your muscles to the point of cramping them. Just tighten them, count slowly to five, and then relax for a few seconds (10-20) before working with the next muscle group.*
3. *Focus all your attention on the feeling of tension and release. Do not allow your thoughts to wander. Keep focusing on the specific part of the body you are working with. Remember that PMR is a mental as well as a physical exercise.*
4. *Tense and release each muscle group two or three times.*
5. *While tensing each muscle group, try to keep the rest of the body still and quiet. Pretend that your whole being is located in the part of the body with which you are working.*
6. *Although this is not formally taught in many PMR programs, it might be wise to inhale as you tense, hold the breath while you count, and exhale as you release. Authorities disagree about whether your eyes should be open or closed; I would recommend keeping them closed. If you are working with your eyes open, a darkened room might be suggested.*

With the above points in mind, you can begin your specific relaxation exercises. The following is one such plan, although there are many variants:

1. *Take a series of deep breaths. Breathe in slowly, hold it for about five seconds, and then release just as slowly.*
2. *Begin by clenching your dominant fist, hold it, and count to five, release, and repeat two or three times.*
3. *Repeat the procedure by flexing the dominant bicep.*
4. *Repeat with the nondominant fist.*
5. *Repeat with the nondominant bicep.*
6. *Take a short break and concentrate on the feeling of relaxation and inner warmth, or the satisfaction that the feeling of relief gives you.*
7. *Repeat with the muscles of the forehead by either raising or furrowing your eyebrows.*
8. *Repeat by closing and opening your eyes, if you are working with your eyes open.*
9. *Repeat by clenching your jaw.*
10. *Take a short break as described in 6.*
11. *Tense and release the neck muscles by either working with the muscles or, if you have a hard time feeling this group, by touching your chin to your chest.*
12. *Tense and relax the shoulder blades by arching them backward.*
13. *Repeat by pushing your shoulders forward.*
14. *Tighten and then relax the stomach.*
15. *Repeat with the sphincter (rectal) muscle.*
16. *Repeat with the thighs.*
17. *Tense and relax the toes by curling them as tightly as you can.*
18. *Repeat by pulling your toes toward your body.*
19. *Tense and relax your dominant leg muscle.*
20. *Repeat with the nondominant leg muscle.*
21. *Stop and try not to move. Focus your mind on your state of total relaxation and enjoy it.*

Unfortunately, very few manuals explain how to return to a normal state of mind and body after going through this technique. One idea might be to begin stretching your arms and legs a few times while lying down. Stretch several of your other muscles as well, similar to the way you probably prepare to get out of bed after a long night's sleep.

The above exercises represent only a blueprint for relaxing. You may find that various alternative procedures work better for you. One variation

is to begin with the feet and work progressively up the body. It probably does not matter what method of PMR you use. The important thing is to be sure you work with *all* the body's muscle groups, work at a steady and almost rhythmic rate, breathe along with the procedures, and constantly concentrate on the difference between the state of muscle tension and muscle relaxation. By the end of a week's self-training, you should be able to lose all awareness of your body after completing the exercises. This is the optimal state for undergoing OBEs, since the body will probably not automatically resist the release.

If you find it difficult to follow this type of program, you might make a tape to verbally guide you through the exercises. For best results, it helps if a female voice is used for men and a male voice for women. The speaker should use a steady, almost monotonous tone, as though reading a hypnotic induction procedure. The voice should be soft and soothing. A steady and neutral noise in the background will facilitate the effect. The sound of ocean waves striking against the shore is ideal.

The following is the text of one such relaxation tape, commonly used by parapsychologists to help people achieve an inwardly focused and ESP-conductive state of mind and body:

The purpose of this tape is to induce a state of physical and mental relaxation. We will begin with muscular relaxation. Relaxation is the elimination of all muscular tension. Get as comfortable as you can; loosen any clothing that may be too tight. When you relax, do not think about the instructions. Just follow them passively and automatically. When tensing any part of your body, remember to leave all other muscles completely relaxed. Begin by curling your toes downward into a tense position. Tense up more and more and notice the discomfort. Hold this tension while I count from 10 to 1, letting go at the count of 1. (Count) Relax. Now relax your toes completely, and feel the difference. Instead of curling your toes, arch them up toward your face and feel the tension and discomfort all along your shins. Hold this . . . (Count from 10 to 1) . . . relax. Feel the relief in your legs. Next, curl your toes again and tense up your entire legs and calves, making sure the rest of your body is completely relaxed . . . (Count) . . . relax. Enjoy the feeling of relief that accompanies the removal of muscular tension. Relax all tension, release all

pressures, place your body in a state of deep relaxation, going deeper and deeper every time. Next, tense your stomach muscles as tightly as you can as I count . . . (Count) . . . relax. Let go completely. Relax. Arch your back now, and feel the tension all along your spine . . . (Count) . . . relax. Settle down comfortably again. Let go of all of your weight; let go of all of the tension in every muscle of your body. Now focus your attention on your arms and fists. Relax the rest of your body completely. Tense your fists and bend your arms at your elbows, flexing your biceps. Hold this as tightly as you can . . . (Count) . . . relax. Let your arms flop to your sides. Relax completely. Now, take in a deep breath, fill your lungs, feel the tension all over your chest. Hold it . . . exhale. Feel the relief as you exhale. Relax. Make sure that all of the body parts that we have concentrated on are completely relaxed. If there is any tension, relax those muscles completely. Now, press your head back as far as it will go. Feel the tension in the muscles of your neck . . . (Count) . . . relax. Bend your head forward now . . . touch your chest with your chin . . . (Count) . . . relax. Relax completely. Tightly squinch up all the muscles of your face and around your eyes, making a face. Hold this . . . (Count) . . . relax. Remove all strain and tension. Relax your neck . . . your throat . . . mouth . . . relax your scalp . . . smooth out the muscles of your forehead . . . relax your eyes, and all of your facial muscles. Relax . . . relax . . . relax. Relax every muscle of your body. Focus on that area which is most relaxed and imagine that same pleasant, positive, relaxing feeling to spread, engulfing your entire body in one comfortable, warm, pleasant feeling of relaxation. Relax totally and completely.

We will now begin mental relaxation. Hold your head straight and lift your eyes upward in order to strain the eyes. Do not blink. Your eyelids will become heavy; your eyelids will become tired. While waiting for this effect, take a deep breath, and while exhaling, imagine yourself becoming more deeply relaxed. Imagine relaxing more and more with each breath. When your eyes feel heavy and tired, do not force them to remain open. Close your eyes when they become tired. Take deep breaths, and with each exhalation, become more deeply relaxed. Now, concentrate again on relaxing . . . relaxing your whole body. Relax all tension . . . release all

pressures. Place your body in a state of deep relaxation, going deeper and deeper. Make certain that all muscles are completely relaxed. It feels so good to be completely and totally relaxed. Noises and sounds will not distract you, but will help you to become more mentally at ease and more relaxed.

Of course, mere relaxation is not going to propel you out of the body automatically. Special procedures must be used to facilitate the OBE. Self-suggestion is the best bet, but only after you have already become adept at entering into a deep state of PMR. Here is how to combine PMR with specific OBE suggestions:

1. *As you lie down and prepare to relax, give yourself the mental suggestion that you will have an OBE at the completion of the exercises. Before beginning them, wait several seconds to allow the suggestion to register in the unconscious mind.*
2. *As you relax each muscle group and exhale, will that your mind or mental body release at that specific point. (This is a technique that Charles Lancelin recommended to induce out-of-body travel.)*
3. *At the end of the session, focus your concentration on the forehead or top of the head. Imagine your mind leaving the body by traveling right through and out of it.*

Don't expect results the first time you try this. Remember that relaxation is a skill, something you will have to learn. Since it will take practice, perhaps two or three weeks of daily discipline will be necessary before you really begin to feel how relaxation affects the body. Most authorities on relaxation do not recommend that these procedures be used at night before you go to bed, since sleep may take over before you finish. You should follow this advice at first. After you have mastered the PMR technique, however, you might try them as you lie down for your night's rest. Carry them out right in bed. When you are done, remain still on your back and let yourself fall asleep—but try to remain conscious up to the very moment that sleep overtakes you. Constantly hold in mind the suggestion that you will leave the body naturally as soon as your conscious mind slips into sleep. This technique is especially recommended by Sylvan Muldoon, who used it as one of his chief methods for inducing nocturnal OBEs.

How will you know when you are beginning to have OBEs, or are at

least on the right track? Your first clue will be when you experience odd sinking and/or floating sensations as you remain relaxed. A few people suddenly find themselves just spontaneously out-of-body, but most go through a stage where they actually feel the release of consciousness. In my own case, for instance, I *always* feel as though I am sinking right through my bed or couch when I begin to have an OBE. At the same time my head begins buzzing wildly—almost as though I were standing in the middle of a busy pinball arcade.

Many people who have had spontaneous OBEs while simply resting have remarked on these same symptoms. When you begin to feel these sensations—and they can be dramatic—try to intensify them. Do not move under any condition. This will disrupt the OBE, and by this time you will probably be cataleptic anyway. Will yourself to leave the body. You might get a fright at first when these symptoms manifest, especially if you find yourself unable to move. This type of pre-OBE catalepsy is actually a good sign. Don't fight against it. If it seems that you just can't get out of body but find yourself still paralyzed, don't be too concerned. To break the catalepsy, merely focus all your attention on one of your fingers and then try to move it. The finger will invariably move, and this minor breach will overcome the catalepsy.

COMMENTS

There is considerable evidence that physical relaxation in itself is conducive to the spontaneous occurrence of the OBE. When Celia Green of the Institute of Psychophysical Research in Oxford began surveying the general public about the OBE in the 1960s, several of her informants reported that their OBEs occurred when they were meditating, relaxing, or during actual PMR exercises.

For example, one correspondent told Green how her OBEs occurred as a result of yogic meditation linked with PMR exercises. Her technique was to still each part of the body without the use of specific tension or relaxation procedures.

"I had to lie down on the floor," she wrote, "in a fairly warm atmosphere, not cold, and concentrate on putting my whole body to sleep, breathe deeply, two or three times, and let my body completely go.

"And start on my little toe of my right foot and when it was asleep,

the next toe, and so on . . . on up my body, and finally my eyes, commanding my body to go to sleep . . .

"I tried this out several times of course, without too much success, and then I finally achieved it."

On one occasion the woman felt that she was drifting away. She opened her eyes and discovered that she was looking down on herself and the floor from a point somewhere above her body.

Another correspondent explained that invariably she would doze off during her relaxation exercises and an OBE could occur naturally.

"... I always dozed off," she went on to say. "And an odd thing would happen, a sensation of being in spirit floating in the far righthand corner of my bedroom near the ceiling (always in the same position)."

The woman also discovered—as I did—that sinking and floating sensations are the first stages of a full-blown OBE. When they occurred, she knew she was about to leave the body.

Another one of Green's correspondents automatically had an OBE from sleep as a result of her relaxation exercises.

Each night in bed, lying on my back, I relaxed my body piece by piece, starting from the toes until, finally reaching the eyes, one was supposed to concentrate on an imaginary void between the eyebrows, then, filling it with a flower image, allow this to develop into full flower.

For weeks I simply fell asleep at waist level, as it were, and gradually the idea of leaving the physical body became neglected, although the ritual of relaxing had become a habit . . .

Then one night in the drowsy state before sleep I was aware of a small sensation which might be likened to a tablet of soap slipping from one's grasp in the bath. I was awake . . . I turned to look at my husband and was vaguely surprised to find that I was looking down on him and as I looked I rose higher and saw my sleeping form next to his.

These cases cannot be considered anomalous. When Green asked her informants about their state of mind and body at the time of their OBEs, 33 percent of them stated that they were more relaxed than usual. Only 11 percent described themselves as more tense. This trend in the data was more substantial when Green surveyed those correspondents who had

undergone more than one OBE. A little over 41 percent described themselves as more physically relaxed than normal, while 11 percent were apparently more tense.

As mentioned earlier, it is remarkable how many gifted OBE travelers have spontaneously developed relaxation techniques as a direct route to the OBE. Hugh Callaway mentioned a variant of the PMR procedure as a means he used to leave the body; and S. Keith Harary and Sylvan Muldoon have also employed some sort of relaxation technique.

Harary, for instance, maintains that his OBEs occur quite naturally as a result of quieting down the body. In a description of his technique, which he wrote especially for this book, he says:

Prior to experiencing an "at will" OBE, I induce an initial "cooling down" of my physical body. This is simply my allowing a feeling of relaxed numbness to spread through the physical body so that it will be out of my immediate conscious awareness.

During my early attempts at an "at will" OBE, I would reach this state of relaxed numbness by suggesting to myself that each part of my body would, in turn, begin to feel very heavy, warm, and relaxed. I would usually work from my feet up to my head in this way, allowing all outside thoughts to passively drift through my mind. During this "cooling down" phase, I would also suggest to myself that, if I wished, I could have an OBE and that the slightest disturbance of the physical body would immediately terminate the experience. When this was done, I was able to have an OBE.

After much practice I found that it became more and more simple for my body to enter the "cooled down" state. Eventually all I would need to do would be to suggest to myself that I would relax, that I would be able to have an OBE, and that there would be no difficulty of any sort (as there could not be difficulty unless I allowed it to occur or unless I was in an unpleasant state psychologically). A few moments after the suggestion has been given, I usually achieve the "cooled down" state "automatically." I need only concentrate on where it is I wish to "go" in the OBE, and I will go there.

Sylvan Muldoon employed a somewhat different system, although his basic principles are similar to Jacobson's PMR, since their goal is to quiet down and focus attention on each segment of the body.

Muldoon gives a full description of this technique in *The Projection of the Astral Body*. The method is not so much a specific OBE-induction technique as it is a way of placing the body in an OBE-conducive state of relaxation. Instead of working with the body's muscle groups, however, Muldoon's technique focuses on the gradual slowing of the pulse rate. Muldoon viewed this procedure as a substitute for relaxation exercises, even though specific tension-release exercises are subsumed within it. He points out that "the exercise for slowing the pulse also causes concentration and relaxation—thus eliminating the necessity of special exercises for each of these factors."

The following point-by-point program is a codification of the Muldoon relaxation method, drawn from his extensive writings:

1. *Begin by lying on your back or on the right side with your hands at your sides. (Note here the consistency with the Lancelin techniques, which also forbid lying on the left side.)*
2. *Take a deep breath, hold it for a moment, and then try to "force" the breath into the pit of the stomach. The diaphragm should expand. Then release the breath. (Again, note the similarity to the Lancelin method, which also emphasizes the role the stomach plays during the induction of an OBE.)*
3. *Repeat this procedure six to eight times.*
4. *Close your eyes and concentrate on the top of your head and try to tense the scalp muscles and then relax them.*
5. *Repeat with the neck muscles.*
6. *Repeat with the upper arms.*
7. *Repeat this process down through the entire body. At this point, of course, the Muldoon method is virtually identical to many PMR procedures, even though they were published some nine years before Edmund Jacobson—the credited founder of the PMR technique—issued his description of the method.*
8. *Focus all attention on the heart and feel its rhythmic pulsations. Concentrate on them until you can both hear and feel them without*

any difficulty. Feel them arising from within the body, but not with your hands, which should still be at your sides.

This completes the first phase of the Muldoon heart control method. You should not venture on to the next phase until you have mastered the ability to focus attention on the heart while totally relaxed. When you have reached this degree of mastery, proceed to the next step.

9. *While still lying down, try to transfer awareness of your heart-beat to any part of the body. Focus all your attention on various parts of the body and feel your heart beating there. Don't imagine it beating; you must literally feel the pulsations at that spot.*
10. *Beginning at your forehead, go progressively down through your body and feel your heart beating in each location—first at the scalp, then the cheeks, neck, stomach, lower abdomen, thighs, calves, and the feet.*
11. *Now reverse the procedure and go back up the body until you reach the medulla oblongata, the deep and lowest part of the brain.*
12. *Focus attention on the heart and will it to beat slower.*

The key to the OBE, according to Muldoon, is to get the heart beating slowly and steadily. In other words, you are trying to imitate the state in which the body rests during normal sleep while consciously you remain awake. This state is the natural one in which the OBE occurs.

These procedures are really not at all difficult. Modern studies in biofeedback training—the art of regulating the body's supposedly automatic functions—has proved that, with a minimum amount of practice, most people can slow or speed the heartbeat at will.

When I was toying with the Muldoon technique as a teenager, I had no difficulty mastering this ability and could lower my pulse to 60 beats per minute and then raise it to 90 within seconds. Once when I was in college, I even sadistically tormented a doctor who was trying to take my pulse by employing what I had learned! (Remember that all this was long before biofeedback became popular.) The basic problem is learning to control the heartbeat so that it remains steady. Muldoon gave some specific suggestions for learning this level of control:

We are now supposing that you are lying upon your back, relaxed, with your arms at your sides, and that you have acquired the ability to feel your heart's pulsations in any part of your body. Now you are concentrating upon your heart again, and if it is not steady you are to tell it, in your mind, that it is steady, and you are to catch the rhythm of the proper beat, and beat time in your mind, concentrating upon the thump of the heart at the proper rhythm. Keep this exercise up until your heart is beating steadily.

Now, if it had before been unsteady, and you have steadied it, or if it be naturally steady and healthy, you are now ready to concentrate upon a slower beat. Think only of these pulsations. Concentrate upon these pulsations, which you feel in your chest, in your heart, beat time to them in your mind, even allowing your head to move slightly at each beat, if it be inclined to. After keeping up this true rhythm for several minutes, begin beating time—in your mind—just a little more slowly.

Do not stop concentrating in order to determine whether or not the heart is obeying your suggestion, for you will be able to know this fact in your mind. Continue your concentration, in this manner, until you have the heart beating at the speed at which you wish it to beat.

Muldoon did not indicate just how slowly one should get the heart beating, but he mentions that, in his own case, he would lower it to 42. He did not state whether this rate was optimum for everyone.

Since at this point the body is mimicking sleep, Muldoon believed that an OBE would occur naturally. This is what he found in his own case; but then he was a natural projector. You might wish to supplement this technique with specific self-suggestions for OBE release. After you have lowered your heart rate and stilled the body, mentally command yourself to leave the body. The same type of suggestion outlined in the previous section on the PMR/OBE induction technique might best be employed.

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Here are three traditional methods:

MYSTICAL METHOD #1

- 1) It is best to attempt projection in a room which is dark or in semi-darkness since this makes for greater restfulness and relaxation. Seat yourself comfortably. Always remember that you wish to be comfortable but if you are too comfortable you may fall off to sleep. Therefore a straight chair, with arms and back high enough to rest your head, is usually best. But any comfortable position is fine. Do not cross your feet or clasp your hands as this helps to maintain body awareness.
- 2) Relax, breathe evenly and induce the **relaxed state**. Understand within yourself that astral projection is a perfectly normal activity and that, in fact, you "project" each time you go to sleep. Give yourself the suggestion you are going to succeed.
- 3) Look at the opposite side of your room. Choose something that you can identify such as a picture hanging on the wall, a vase, or any object. We will call this object the "target". If the room is too dark, a very low wattage light should illuminate your target so you can see it. Memorize the target. Close your eyes and visualize the target. Mentally rise from your chair or couch and go to the opposite side of your room and examine the target. Visualize yourself doing this. (You may have to spend some time memorizing your own visual image, most people cannot close their eyes and remember how they look!) You must build every element of actuality into your visualization, you must hear the sounds in the next room or in the street, if there are any. You must notice and smell any odours there may. Reach out with your hands and touch the target, feel it, notice its texture (hard, soft, rough, smooth, etc..) If the target begins to fade, open your eyes, look at it and refresh your memory, then close your eyes again and continue. It requires a strong desire and a strong effort of will. (Remember that "strong desire" and "strong effort of will" is coming from the emotional and mental levels **not from the physical!** In "concentrating harder" you must not knit your eyebrows, grimace your face, clench your fists and tighten your muscles! **THAT IS THE VERY OPPOSITE OF WHAT YOU MUST DO.** Your physical condition must remain absolutely relaxed, **relaxed, RELAXED.** The moment physical tension enters the exercise is the moment the experiment becomes blocked.) Remember that what we have come to call the **relaxed state** is the key to all success on the mental and psychic levels. Give your desire, your wish, your want to the Chief Engineer. All knowledge and all power is in the mind, especially in that part we call the sub-conscious. When you are able to tap into your "mind"

you have the Universe and all its possibilities in your grasp. There will be no need to give instructions regarding the "out of the body" experience. Having exteriorized, you will find the only difference when you are "out of the body" compared to when you are "in the body" is that your mind is clearer, you can think more sharply ... and you move by wishing to do so and not by moving your feet! In other words you only think where you want to be (in the next room, outside in the street, or back in the body) ... and you are there.

MYSTICAL METHOD #2

- 1) You follow steps 1 and 2 above. You close your eyes and visualize the place or the person you wish to visit or reach.
- 2) Remember that astral projections are working from the subconscious, emotional and mental levels therefore there must be great feeling and great desire. In visualizing the person or place you must build in everything. You must not only see the person or place, you must **feel** you are there, you must hear the sounds and smell the odours. If you are projecting to a garden for example, you must feel the grass under your feet and note its texture, smell the roses, see the plants, hear the birds chirping and the wind rustling in the trees, taste the water in the stream ... you have to make the scene as lifelike and as vivid as you possibly can. You have to forget yourself, forget that you are sitting in a chair in your room, (this is why you should not cross your feet or clasp your hands, it accentuates body awareness), you have to completely go into the scene. If you project to someone, it is best to project to them when you think they are asleep. When you have attained a clear visualization and you know you are in contact, speak to them. Speak out loud. Speak in short sentences.

ALWAYS END ALL MYSTICAL EXERCISES BY BECOMING AWARE OF YOURSELF, YOUR BODY. STRETCH, RUB YOUR HANDS AND FACE, GET UP AND STAMP YOUR FEET, DRINK A GLASS OF WATER.

*A variation on the above methods is to sit comfortably and induce the **relaxed state**. Then begin to concentrate on your body, awakening the cells to a tingling feeling as you have learnt before, ever since Exercise #3 The Stimulator, in Liber 4, starting from your feet and coming up to the top of your head. Breathe slowly and rhythmically. Then simply drift out of your body, just as smoke drifts out of a chimney. Do not try to extricate yourself from your body, do not try to 'force'. Simply hold the **DESIRE** and let it happen. Some find it helpful to concentrate on a point at the top of the head, or on the 'third eye' at the forehead between the eyebrows.*

MYSTICAL METHOD #3

Lie on your back. Induce the relaxed state. Formulate deeply within yourself while going to sleep, the explicit and great desire to move towards a very familiar place, in a state of wakefulness. This place must be at least ten meters away from where the physical body is resting.

This is an involuntary method. Failed involuntary astral projections usually come from the fact that the projection remained very close to the physical body and the strong elasticity of the "silver cord" straight away brought back together the two parts momentarily separated through various causes (dreams of strong desires to move, for example).

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADVANCEMENT TO THE EIGHTH DEGREE

- 1) Photocopy this page & the reverse side, or detach and use this leaf.
- 2) Answer the 7⁰ exam on the reverse side.
- 3) Complete the form below. Return both pages to the address shown and include your dues-donation according to your postal zone.
- 4) Your exam will be corrected and graded. (The grades you acquire accrue as credits re the MSS and DD Diplomas.) If you obtain a Pass, all the material for the 8⁰ and your new membership card will be sent you in one package. (NOTE: Your membership card shows your active status for Commandery/Priory membership.)
- 5) If you fail the exam, your dues-donation will be applied as a credit to your account and you will be sent another exam paper for reexamination. Do your exam properly the first time and save yourself the trouble of having to do it over.
- 6) When you receive the 8⁰ Libers, read each lecture through once, then go over it a second time, more slowly and thoroughly - then move on to the next lecture. Don't get lost in the sauce! Don't get hung up on one lecture thinking you don't understand it well enough to move on! Subsequent lectures throw light on earlier ones and of course you can revise. Some members like to study one Liber a month, others like to study two, three or four Libers per month. **There is no set schedule, work at your own pace. There is no need to rush.**

DUES-DONATION FOR THE EIGHTH DEGREE (Libers 81-84 by Air Mail)

Zone "A" Barbados. The Commonwealth Caribbean, Netherlands Antilles and Guyana. \$25.00 Barbados Currency.

Zone "B" All other countries. \$25.00 U.S. Currency. (Notice: Your dues-donation includes Air Mail postage.)

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It is becoming more and more obvious to me that the Work in which we are engaged, is making for a more spiritually enlightened and mature humanity. I realize my ability to think clearly, unrestricted by the influences of my peers and the popular opinions of the day ... has strengthened ... and I thank God for the confidence I have gained and the nerve to stand up and do what I consider to be right and honourable. It is a privilege to support the MAGNUM OPUS. I enclose my dues-donation for the Eighth Degree as a small contribution to help the Cause, as well as my 7⁰ exam, hoping to be passed to the Eighth Degree. I also renew my pledge to hold all lectures and Libers of the ICES as personal and confidentially loaned to me, for my eyes only.

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SEVENTH DEGREE EXAM

One of our members wants to know why the students must submit exams! For one thing the grades help our assessment in the awarding of our Diplomas. But as equally important: they enable students to express what they are learning.

Use all the space provided in giving your answers to the following questions -

1) Share your thoughts on the subject of hypnosis.

2) Does consciousness survive the death of the physical body?
On what authority are your views founded?